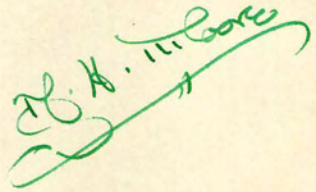
HUGO
GERNSBACK

A Vintage Radio MONOGRAPH

by

D. H. MOORE



The
Vintage Radio
Foundation®

4062 OAK POINTE COURT
HAYWARD, CALIFORNIA 94542

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NOTE:

The two cuts of Gernsback with type-set captions appeared originally in the "Smithonian" Magazine; a credit was not listed. All other illustrations are from the author's files.

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DEDICATION

MORGAN E. McMAHON

For His Distinctive
Contribution To The
Vintage Radio Hobby.

H. Gernsback

HUGO GERNSBACK

A Specialty Pioneer

"Most of you are like sheep following blindly some well-meaning but misguided leader. Someone gets up a certain type of outfit, and immediately the majority of radio amateurs follow suit, and copy it down to the last screw!"
- 1922

The comments above were in Gernsback's editorial in the first issue of his re-named RADIO NEWS. It is interesting to note that none of his readers protested at the implied me-too-ism; today, of course, there would be a veritable niagara of ungrammatical and mindless protestations in Letters-To-The-Editor.....

If any one indivdual could be said to tower over all of his contemporaries in raising the awareness of everyman to the magic and the romance of Radio, that man would have to be Hugo Gernsback.

There is a saying among Germans that heroes are not at ease in the presence of other heroes: a much older Irish saying has it that falcons don't chase butterflys. When the Gernsback media empire collapsed in the Spring of 1929, through some shady legal machinations of his competitors, there was an audible sigh of relief among media men of lesser talent and merit.

* * *

Hugo Gernsback was born in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg of what he later referred to as well-to-do parents. At the age of six he was given an electrical house-bell, a roll of lead-sheathed wire, and an old Leclauche wet-cell battery. But it was the mysterious green of the spark that really fascinated him, that was produced at the platinum contacts. He quickly mastered the intricacies of house-bells rung by electricity, and began installing house-bells in his home-town. Later, he included the installation of telephones to his services. All of his electrical goods had to be imported from France and Germany.

Shortly after his 13th birthday the Mother Superior Bodewing, of the near-by Carmelite Convent, asked him to install telephones between the cells of the nuns so that they might converse while resting. In spite of his tender years, special dispensation from Pope Leo XIII had to be gotten before he could enter the convent.

Learning of Marconi's experiments, Gernsback set about to imitate what Marconi had done. He also decided to install lights illuminated by electricity in his parent's home, using wet-cells as a primary energy source. He designed his own batteries and succeeded in rigging a system that functioned as a trickle-charge during the day, and supplied energy for his lamps after dark. His lamps emitted a luminance on the order of 2 watts...

He later attended university at Brussels and in Germany, all the while reading voraciously everything he could find on the emerging sciences of the time. In 1903 he decided to emigrate to America in order to exploit his original battery, as such opportunity did not exist in the Europe of his day.

The battery was a compact unit measuring 4"x6"x4", and rated at 124 amperes. But it proved to be too costly to manufacture so that he took on a partner, L.A.Coggeshall, to help in re-designing the battery, and at the same time setting-up the ELECTRO IMPORTING COMPANY. Their first office was a walk-up in Lower Manhattan on the corner of a street that was to become famous as "Radio Row" - Cortland Street. The business proved successful, until the Depression of 1909.

An interesting situation developed when Gernsback placed the first-ever advert for radio apparatus in SCIENTIFIC AMERICA, and in YOUTH's COMPANION. The "radio" advertised was a crystal set priced at $7.50. There was an immediate outcry from certain segments of the public that no "radio" could be sold for $7.50, therefore Gernsback was a charlatan. Needless to say, the editors of the media mentioned were taken aback by the reaction, especially when some readers began writing letters to the Mayor of New York City.

The up-shot was that a burly Irish policeman (all policemen

were Irish in those days) was sent to investigate the allegations of the readers, and the claims of the advert. After an hour or so with Gernsback, the bedazzled policeman retired, and the charges faded.

His next step was to design and issue a sales-catalogue, which would be another "first", a reproduction of its cover is shown herein. If you have copies of RADIO BROADCAST of the late Twenties at hand, you might like to compare the winged female figure motif used by both. The catalogue, ELECTRICITY, was first published in 1906. Two years later he published the first magazine, MODERN ELECTRICS, devoted to Radio and the inculcation in the minds of everyman that Radio was magic.

It was predictable that he would also set-up the first Radio shop, and among his customers were sons of Teddy Roosevelt and grandsons of Rockefeller. As interest spread across the country, he next organised the first Radio-fan society, the WIRELESS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA, complete with certificates of membership and a lapel-pin. He issued the first directoty of wireless operators, chiefly maritime, compiled vast tables of technical data, and began to publish a myriad of books, booklets, pamphlets, dealing with subject-matter quite alien to Radio, but which helped establish the Gernsback Media Empire.

MODERN ELECTRICS became RADIO NEWS in 1920 and the men he had selected for his editors included such subsequently meaningful names as Lescarbours, Cisin, Fitch, Laughter, Sleeper, Lynch, Lacault, Jones and Rider. Among the many media innovations introduced by Gernsback were the tipt-in reply coupon, the reply postal, a department for his readers who wanted more information on specific marques or hardware, and most innovative, the offer of cash prizes for new ideas in Radio. Other media which had come into being, such as PACIFIC RADIO (later RADIO), RADIO WORLD, THE RADIO HOME, all tried to beguile new readers with offers of free gifts, such as soldering-irons, variable condensers, wave-traps, etc., but none offered cash prizes.

Robt. E. Lacault joined Gernsback in 1920, as Senior Editor, thereby causing Arthur Lynch to resign in a huff, as he felt the title should have been his. This may have been the first manifestation of Lynch's wayward ego, which was to grow more wayward as the decade progressed. Gernsback referred to Lacault as his "most brilliant editor", and the story of Lacault can be found in the "Ultradyne Monograph". When Lacault resigned he set-up shop on his own, to become known variously as R.E.L., Phenix Radio, and Radio Engineering Labs - also a play on his initials.

The multiciplicity of firsts by Gernsback are really too numerous to list here, along with his famous predictions of future sciences, which we now lump under the generic term "technology". All, however, represent a further justification for writing of a unique individual.

There is, as of this writing, a move by the F.C.C. to delete the use of A.M. bands by amateurs, a misguided move by faceless men and of women sitting in D.C. who probably have never taken a "ham" examination. In 1925 the Department of Commerce, headed by Herbert Hoover, controlled Radio licenses, allocations of frequencies, permits for stations, etc. The Department moved to ban all "ham" operators from the air. Gernsback immediately launched an impassioned series of editorials protesting the move, and he won. The so-called Radio Bill that was finally adopted by the Commerce Department was copied almost word-for-word from Gernsback's editorials. Another example of our endebtedness to him.

* * *

In 1917 MODERN ELECTRICS was sold to a combine that put it through several name changes, eventually becoming POPULAR SCIENCE, but it was never a threat to SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN. In passing, it might be mentioned that SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN lured several of Gernsback's editors.

Gernsback anticipated the entry of the U.S. into the Kaiser's War, which was probably due to his European perspective. He began to organise the RADIO LEAGUE OF AMERICA, to train radio operators a full year before the U.S. entered the War.His WIRELESS LEAGUE was dropt, and the Board of the RADIO LEAGUE included DeForest. Tesla. Fassender.

A modish lapel pin was again designed, and students of the RADIO LEAGUE went on to serve in all branches of the Military when the U.S. did, in fact, enter the War. In return Gernsback received many letters of commendation from the Government, as well as Certificates of Appreciation - the forerunner of what, during another German-inspired war, we were to know as "E"-Flags awarded D.O.D. Contractors.

The RADIO LEAGUE was disbanded after the War, and Hiram Maxim came to the fore with his A.R.R.L. Gernsback went back to building his media empire, publishing a veritable niagara of books and booklets. In the early Twenties, for example, 1,500,000 copies of his booklets that treated of the elementary aspects of Radio were sold world-wide, and his RADIO NEWS was the dominant Radio magazine around the globe, with an average circulation of 200,000 copies per issue.

The famous RALPH 124C 41+ must be mentioned. It was a novel by Gernsback, written in 1908, and is today a collector's item. It came about simply because Gernsback was ending-up with too many unfilled pages in MODERN ELECTRIC, and in order to fill them, he began writing the RALPH opus in serial form. He also wrote many articles under a pen-name, for the same reason. RALPH revealed his obsessive fascination with future science and outer space, which endured as long as he lived. It was turgidly written, and quite sophomoric in spots, and the story-line was in keeping with the times, in that it was a story of a man

falling in love with a woman, enduring all manner of hardships, and eventually coming together to live happily ever-after. But the story-line was really quite secondary to the scientific gadgets and devices and prophetic basis of things to come.

Television, molecular transport, rocketry, ray-guns, mental telepathy all figured in RALPH. A cut of the book is shown elsewhere in this essay. The title also revealed Gernsback's droll sense of humour, which many who knew him often remarked upon. He actually had a heavy Germanic accent, which many classified as German, which it wasn't, and was the inevitable result of mastering four languages simultaneously - French, English, German, Luxembourgian. If you have mastered a foreign language, then you know that certain speech patterns and rhythms you grew up with in your native tongue are unconsciously carried over into the use of the foreign language. This is neither good nor bad, simply an inherent characteristic of learning another language.

The humour of Gernsback anent RALPH is revealed in the 124C 41+. Speak the numerals aloud and you will hear "One To Foresee". This was less a reference to the story-line than to Gernsback telling the world that he was forecasting the marvellous things to come from science and inventions of man.

While Jules Verne, H.G.Wells, and later Edgar Rice Burroughs all came to represent well-known names in science-fiction, it has been forgotten that it was Gernsback who coined the term "Science-Fiction", and while RADIO NEWS was his money-making magazine, his AMAZING STORIES was his real love. In retrospect, RALPH 124C 41+ remains a most remarkable labour in that the mechanical, electrical, chemical devices and exotic weapons and communication equipments were all foretold, on the one hand; and rendered a personal relateability for readers of the day. You will find echoes of RALPH in Orwell's 1984.

* * *

The collapse of his media empire occurred in the Spring of 1929, six months before the Wall Street Crash. The collapse was brought about by envious competitors who found an obscure legal technicality in his corporate structure. The trio that took over the empire were from Chicago - Harrington, Fly, MacKinnon. They set-up shop as TECH PUBLICATIONS, and employed that gadfly of the Radio fraternity, one Authur H. Lynch, as Editorial Director, a title he relished. An aside on Lynch might not be amiss here:

In 1922 he was a Gernsback editor, and always felt that he would become Senior Editor within two years. The time frame is important. When Genrsback hired Robt. E. Lacault and gave him the title, Lynch immediately resigned with bad grace. He subsequently became editor for RADIO BROADCAST, had a go at manufacturing Radio hardware, chiefly

Visionary young publisher, up-and-coming at 30.

resistance-type voltage stabilisers for tubes, similar to "Amperite", contributed extensive modifications to most of the popular circuits to appear in Radio media (his modifications were always "improvements), and was given to wearing outlandish "jazz-bow" ties and plus-fours.

His first editorial for the "new" RADIO NEWS was a full-page paen of sophomoric vitrol aimed at demeaning Gernsback and his accomplishments. He retained such Gernsback stalwarts as Cockaday, who had joined Gernsback from POPULAR RADIO, Gordon Taylor, and Dorff. Lynch did show excellent judgement in retaining J.F.Odenback, who had come to Gernsback at the very beginning of his enterprises, and who was responsible for the excellent schematics of the early RADIO NEWS. Frank Jones had been a Technical Editor for a long time, and was immediately sacked by Lynch, who always fancied himself as a Technical Editor.

He resigned from RADIO NEWS after two years, which was the most time he ever spent in any slot, moved to RADIO BROADCAST, resigned after two years, had a go at becoming a manufacturer for a couple of years, then became a U.S. distributor for the British Rheostat Company. He then seems to have dropt from sight and ken.

Parenthetically, as it seems pertinent, Freud was wrong when he insisted that sex was man's strongest drive - it isn't; man's strongest drive is personal vanity, and Lynch's vanity was too transparent not to merit the attention of what we may call Radio Sociologists.

* * *

Because the manipulated collapse of Gernsback's empire seems to be very little known among the current vintage radio hobby, and because it marked a turning point in the thrust and the authority of Radio media, something more might be said.

A conspiracy between B.A.Mackinnon and Authur H. Lynch resulted in the numerous printing firms that produced Gernsback's many media - no one firm in New York City and its environs was big enough to handle all of the printing requirements - suddenly demanding full payment of all bills. For nearly a decade they had been quite content to receive their quarterly payments, usually after a magazine or magazines had been distributed.

The result was that Gernsback was forced to file a petition for bankruptcy. The Irving Trust Company was the Trustee in Banckruptcy for the whole of Gernsback's EXPERIMENTER PUBLISHING COMPANY and CONSRAD imprints. This immediately affected 16 title, of which RADIO NEWS and AMAZING STORIES were the most prominent, along with SCIENCE & INVENTION and Sidney Gernsback's RADIO LISTENERS' GUIDE & CALL BOOK - all of which were of considerable merit to the home-constructor.

Irving Trust became Receiver in February of 1929, and Trustee on the 28th of April, with Guster Gardener signing for Irving Trust. Gardener was Assistant Vice-President of Irving Trust, and handled the whole affair single-handedly. Mackinnon was named Business Manager and, of course, Lynch became Editorial Director.

At the time of filing the petition, E.P.C. listed liabilities approximating $500,000, and assets estimated at $182,000. On the gold standard, these were respectable figures. The principle creditors were:

Bulkley Dunton Co. (printers)	$154,406
Art Colour Printing	152,989
Ed Langer Printing Co.	14,614
Walter Braunstein	10,258
Wayne Paper Products	9,249
Steidinger Press	8,719
Service Photo Co.	6,277
Sidney Gernsback	8,450

As mentioned, CONSRAD, another division of Gernsback's empire, was

also affected, which included Aero Mechanics, Amazing Stories, and the RADIO NEWS radio station, WRNY.

While the new Editorial Director stated that the publishing activities of E.P.C. and CONSRAD would be continued, the Wall Street Crash six months later called a halt to Lynch's guranteed "improvements", and few of the former media survived.

* * *

By July of 1929 Gernsback was back in the publishing business, with editorial offices on Park Place, the newspaper row of New York at that time, and with a co-operative printing plant in Mt. Morris, Illinois. The new company, called TECHNI-CRAFT PUBLISHING COMPANY, began operation with a new magazine, RADIO-CRAFT. In his maiden editorial he wrote:

> *"Another new Radio Publication? - in 1929? - at this late date? Aren't there enough radio publications now, most of which, as the trade well knows, are NOT successful?...It would be simple to get out publications in a different field, but I'm backing my faith in Radio with a new and better Radio Publication - when practically ALL other present radio publications are in the decline, admittedly...This is what you WON'T get: a re-hash of stuff so sadly prevelant in present-day publications; picture stories of how Roxy killed a fly on a microphone; pictures of the latest radio mast being raised in Timbukto; a picture gallery of radio announcers flanked by goggle-eyed sopranos; radio mathematics that are swell food for Einstein, but give you indigestion; curves, graphs, charts for everything imaginable, and a total loss to you....."*

It is possible to detect a certain bitterness in those words, which would be understandable. And if you are at all familiar with the Radio media of the Twenties you will have no difficulty in recognizing his various references to what had become stock editorial fare. It can also be pointed out that Gernsback had become well-assimilated into the American way-of-life, and his use of the vernacular in the above is an eloquent testament to that.

There had been, briefly, POPULAR BOOK PUBLISHERS, a transitional effort. TECHNI-CRAFT was superceded byRAD-CRAFT PUBLICATIONS, which in turn gave way to GERNSBACK PUBLICATIONS in 1932. Gernsback, himself, continued to play around with the latest tubes, accessories, and so-called advances in Radio - usually trying to apply then to earlier circuits. His "Tetradyne", "Megadyne", "Interflex" and "Periflex" are good examples. The "Tetradyne" was more of a novelty than a legitimate circuit, but it did foreshadow the ferrite-stick antenna.

Of the ultimate 50 magazines Gernsback's media empire comprised, and despite the fact that his name is associated in the popular mind - if at all - with Radio, only four of the titles of his empire dealt directly with Radio. The other publications dealt with such subjects as parlour tricks, health and beauty, stage-magic, bridge, puzzles, joke-books, card-games, cross-words, limerick rhyming booklets, money-making, and on and on. And all media carried the credit-line: Editted by H. Gernsback. We all have our own peculiarities, and I've sometimes wondered if Gernsback simply like to see his name in print. I've known quite a few failed journalism majors over the years, in my work, who contributed nothing to the trade-media for which they worked, but who would always show you their names in print, thereby proving, I suppose, that Billy-of-Avon's dictum was right - the name of the game is the name, regardless of whether or not there is any substance behind it.

But with Gernsback there was obviously substance, of considerable depth and originality. While his RADIO NEWS made the money that kept his media empire going, there was no doubt that true love was science and invention. He coined the phrase "science-fiction", and published the first magazine in the field - AMAZING STORIES. It was said that he would agonize far into the night with his illustrator over the probable form or shape or configuration of men from Mars, time-machines, alien life, etc.

When Sidney Gernsback compiled what we know as the Gernsback Radio Cyclopedia, Hugo was less interested in it than a new magazine he called THE TV EXPERIMENTER, there in 1927. The magazine represented one of his few publishing failures, simply because he was, as usual, about 20 years ahead of his time, and all of his fiery enthusiasm for transmitting picture by radio could not save it. Today, copies of that pioneering magazine are considered to be collectors' items.

A tale that may be apocraphal was that when he was 10 he read Lowell's grossly imaginative book on the planet Mars, complete with the sketches of non-existent "canals". The book fired his imagination to the point where, acording to the story, Hugo fell into a delerium that lasted for three days, during which he raved of creatures called Martians.... His life-long fascination with outer space may be said to have begun at that time. In 1967 he remarked rather wistfully that he would not live to see men landing on the moon. The moon-landing occurred two years after his death, and there is a crater on the moon named for Gernsback.

After the under-handed legal machinations of a competitor that resulted in the abrupt collapse of Gernsback's media empire in March of 1929, it is interested to note that when he returned to the publishing business, his first offering was WONDER STORIES, another science-fiction magazine. When word got out that he was back in publishing, he recieved more than 8,000 advance subscriptions for magazines that had not even been planned!! - so much for the strength of a name.

But like all exceptional men who live beyond their hour of glory, Gernsback never seemed to regain the marvellous ingenuity and imagination that distinguished his earlier years. And it is worthy of mention that the shenanigans that brought down his media empire did not cause him to lose faith inthe U.S., or its people.

When the exceptional man lives beyond his hour of glory, his mortality begins to get in the way, but the unique and far-reaching contributions Gernsback made to Radio, Television, Science-Fiction, have never been equalled by any other early Radio Pioneer, and we all owe him a debt for the sense of wonder and fascination and love we feel today anent vintage Radio. Hugo Gernsback died on the 19th of April, 1967.

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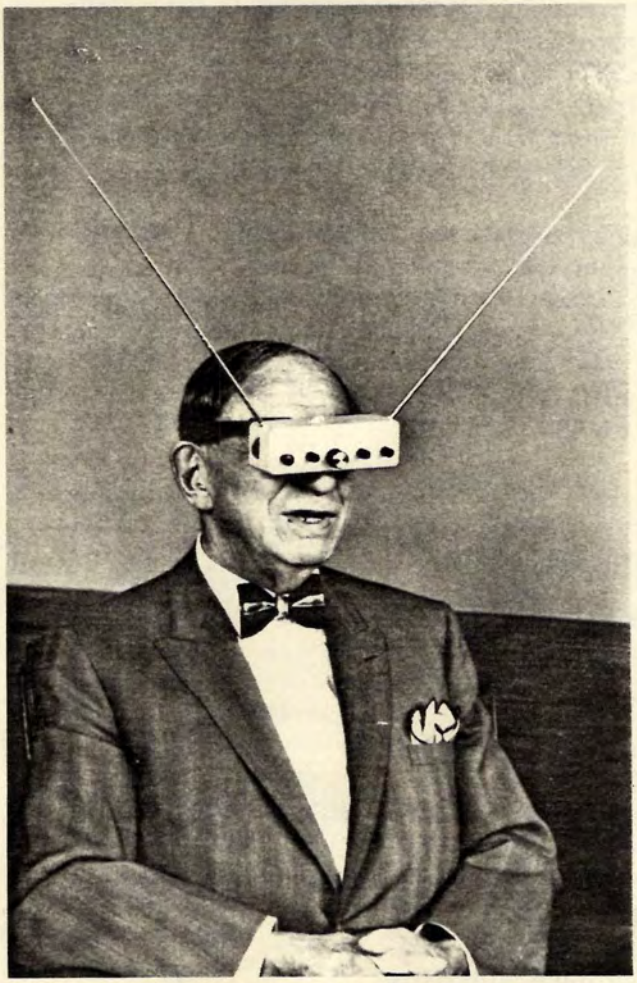
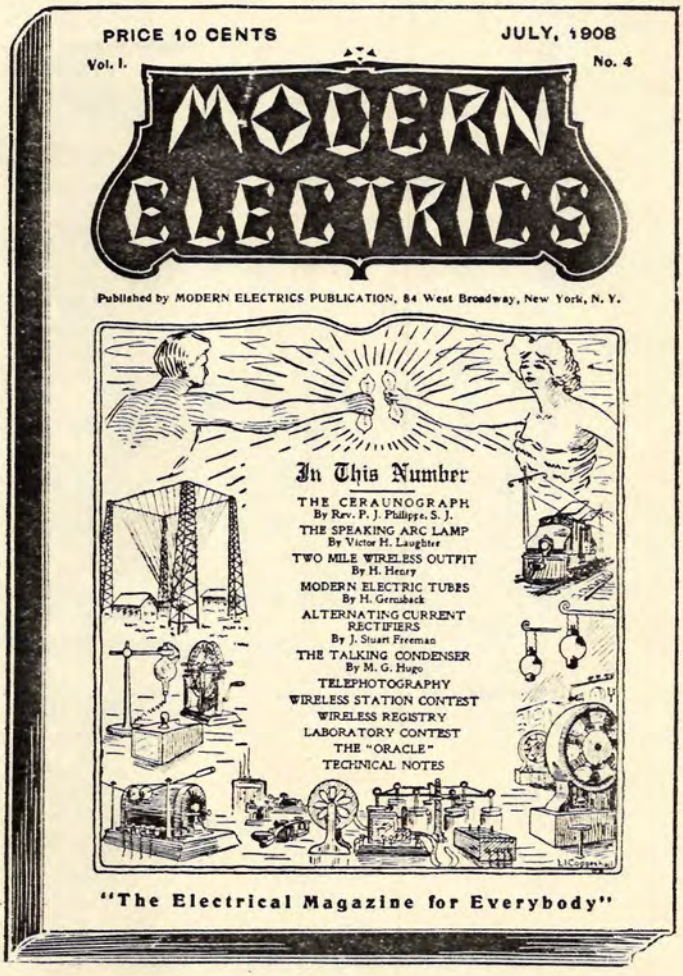


Tirelessly inventive into his 80s, Gernsback models Watchman prototype for *Life* magazine portrait, 1963.

AMERICA's FIRST RADIO PARTS CATALOGUE - 1906



THE FIRST RADIO MAGAZINE - 1908

MODERN ELECTRICS was the first medium to dramatise the infant art of Radio, chiefly crystal sets. It was the precusor to the later POPULAR SCIENCE and RADIO NEWS.

Gernsback used several different names for the articles and essays, when he could not get either enough material, or not enough on a particular theme he wanted to exploit.

FIRST RADIO ASSOCIATION

By Hugo Gernsback

MODERN ELECTRICS

Wireless Association of America

Under the Auspices of "Modern Electrics"

Board of Directors

Dr. Lee de Forest	President
John S. Stone	Vice-President
Wm. Maver, Jr.	Secretary
Hugo Gernsback	Chairman & Business Manager

The Wireless Association of America has been founded with the sole object of furthering the interests of wireless telegraphy and aerophony in America.

We are now on the threshold of the wireless era, and just beginning to rub our intellectual eyes, as it were. Sometimes we look over the wall of our barred knowledge in amazement, wondering what lays beyond the wall, as yet covered with a dense haze.

However, young America, up to the occasion, is wide awake as usual.

Foreign wireless experts, invariably exclaim in wonder when viewing the photographs appearing each month in the "Wireless Contest" of this magazine. They cannot grasp the idea that boys 14 years old actually operate wireless stations successfully every day in the year under all conditions, but they are all of the undivided opinion that Young America leads the rest of the world wirelessly.

Even Dr. Lee de Forest, America's foremost wireless authority, confessed himself surprised that so many young men in this country should be in the possession of such well constructed and well managed wireless stations, which is only another proof that the clear headed young men of this country are unusually advanced in the youngest branch of electrical science.

So far America has lead in the race. The next thing is to stay in the front, and let the others follow. In fact he would be a bold prophet who would even dare hint at the wonders to come during the next decade.

The boy experimenting in an attic today may be an authority to-morrow. However, not even the cleverest inventors or experimenters always have the opportunity of making themselves known to the world, and it is right here that we are confronted with a mystery so far unsolved. Out of 100 per cent of young wireless experimenters, 90 per cent. are extremely bashful. Why this should be so is a mystery.

As stated before the new Wireless Association's sole aim is to further the interests of experimental wireless telegraphy and aerophony in this country.

Headed by America's foremost wireless men, it is not a money-making institution. There are no membership fees, and no contributions required to become a member.

There are two conditions only. Each member of the Association *must be an American citizen* and MUST OWN A WIRELESS STATION, either for sending or for receiving or both.

The Association furnishes a membership button as per our illustration. This button is sold at actual cost and will be mailed to each member on receipt of 15 cents (no stamps nor checks).

This button is made of bronze, triple silver-plated. The flashes from the wireless pole are laid in in hard red enamel, which makes the button quite distinctive. The button furthermore has the usual screw back making it easy to fasten to buttonhole. The lettering itself is laid in in black hard enamel. Size exactly as cut.

On account of the heavy plating it will last for years and is guaranteed not to wear "brassy."

Its diameter is 3/4 inch. This is a trifle larger than usual, the purpose being to show the button off so that it can be readily seen from a distance. The reason is obvious. Suppose you are a wireless experimenter and you live in a fairly large town. If you see a stranger with the Association button, you, of course, would not be backward talking to the wearer and in this manner become acquainted with those having a common object in mind, which is the successful development of "wireless."

The Association furthermore wishes to be of assistance to experimenters and inventors of wireless appliances and apparatus, if the owners are not capable to market or work out their inventions. Such information and advice will be given free.

Somebody suggested that Wireless Clubs should be formed in various towns, and while this idea is of course feasible in the larger towns, it is fallacious in smaller towns where at best only two or three wireless experimenters can be found.

Most experimenters would rather spend their money in maintaining and enlarging their wireless stations, instead of contributing fees to maintain clubs or meeting rooms, etc., etc.

The Board of Directors of this Association earnestly request every wireless experimenter and owner of a station to apply for membership in the Association by submitting his name, address, location, instruments used, etc., etc., to the business manager. There is no charge or fee whatever connected with this.

Each member will be recorded and all members will be classified by town and State.

After February 1st, 1909, members are at liberty to inquire from the Association if other wireless experimenters within their locality have registered. Such information will be furnished free if stamped return envelope is forwarded with inquiry.

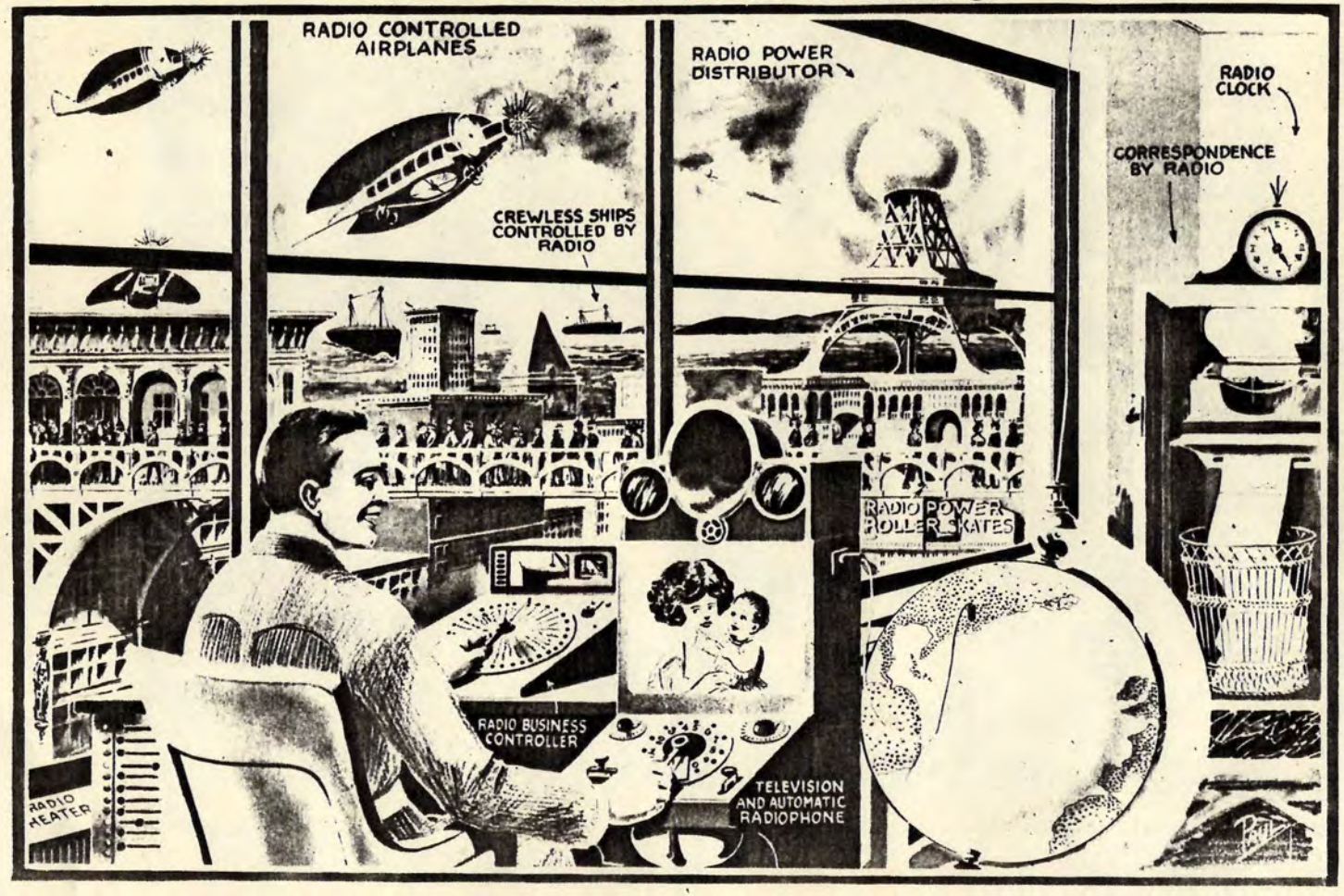
To organize the Association as quickly as possible it is necessary that prospective members make their application *at once*, and without delay.

If you are eligible fill out application sheet and state particulars as follows: Full name; town; State; age; system and apparatus used; full description of aerial.

The above is a reproduction from the January, 1909, issue of MODERN ELECTRICS. Illustration in the center is the first radio association insignia: a lapel button of that time.

Unlike Jules Verne, Gernsback built all of his scientific marvels upon the Victorian concept of romance, although the mantel clock jars a bit.

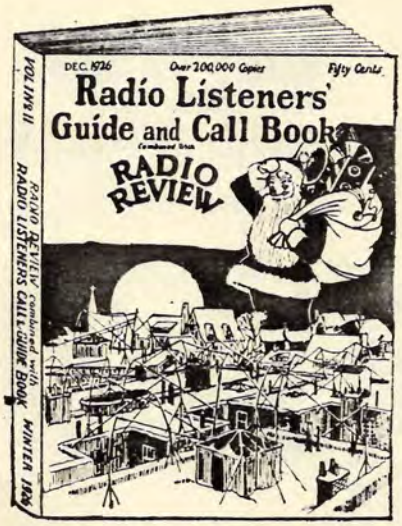
The Future of Radio

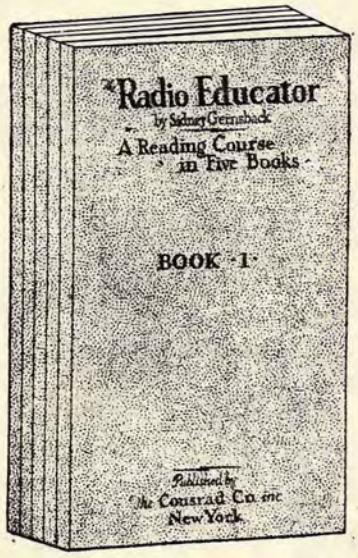


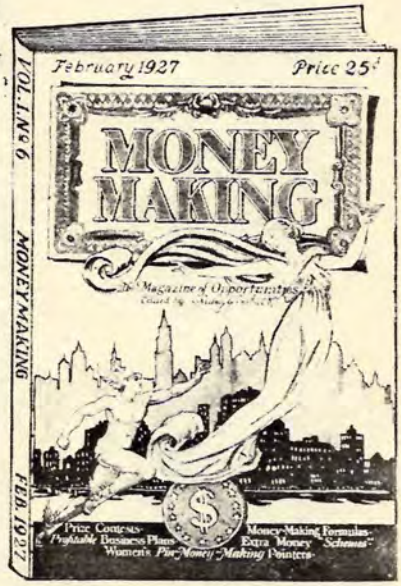
Aside from the wonders foretold in "RALPH", Gernsback's amazing prophecies were also demonstrated in the above cut in RADIO NEWS of December, 1922.

VINTAGE RADIO IDENTIFICATION SKETCH-BOOKS

GERNSBACK'S MEDIA EMPIRE







HOW TO TUNE YOUR RADIO SET
25
RADIO NEWS
RADIO NEWS
Amateurs' Handibook
by the most eminent
RADIO EXPERTS
Vol. No 4
1927
Price 50¢
RALPH 124C 41+
A Romance of the year 2660
By HUGO GERNSBACK
HOUDINI'S SPIRIT EXPOSES
DUNNING PSYCHIC TEST
BEAUTY SECRETS
What Radio Set Shall I Buy?
SAM LOYD'S TRICKS & PUZZLES
150 Radio Hook-Ups
RADIO NEWS
Popular Card Tricks
by
WALTER B. GIBSON
LIMERICK
RHYMING DICTIONARY
LIMERICK WRITING FOR PROFIT
Price 50 cents

STATION WRNY

Gernsback opened his radio station on the 12th of June, 1925. In attendence were many notable names in Radio, not the least of whom was Lee DeForest, seen at the left.

Below is shown Gernsback during one of his weekly broadcasts from WRNY. The engineer in the back-ground was Robt. E. Lacault, who remains the author's favourite early Radio pioneer.

WRNY on Air, Making Another Gernsback Dream Come True

The headline above appeared in 1926, announcing the opening of "Radio News" broadcasting station WRNY. The station was located in the Hotel Roosevelt, which was the fashion, operated on 258.5 meters, and had an output of 500 watts. Its broadcast schedule ran from midnight to 2 p.m., and from 5 p.m. until 8 p.m., every day except Sundays.

It was, of course, a gala occasion, that included a speech by Chauncey Depew, a talk by DeForest, humour from "Bugs" Baer, orchestral renderings by the Ben Bernie orchestra, and other notables. For those of you who do not remember Chauncey Depew, it might be mentioned that he was a kind of adviser to the president, similar to the role of Baruch, and who gained popular fame by telling a reporter that he did not consider himself rich, as he was only worth three million dollars!

Among the entertainers was Elsie Janis, an operatic singer who was most popular, who was about to sail to Europe for a singing tour. DeForest talked of eventual movies in the home, but added that he did not expect to live to see it.

Gernsback, himself, when it came his turn to speak into the microphones, said that the policy of his station was to broadcast regular weekly lectures on various scientific subjects, radio hook-ups or circuit diagrams, and above all - novelty. This reference to novelty is psychologically interesting, when you compare his rather bitter tirade against radio media publishers a few years later, after the collapse of his own media empire, and he was creating new magazines in the early Thirties. In his first editorial, for example, in "Radio Craft", he poked snide fun at the dubious features of other early media, such as a full page being devoted to telling readers that Roxie swatted a fly on his microphone during a broadcast, and then went on to detail what "Radio Craft" was not going to do.

Over-leaf you will find a contemporary cartoon of the opening of the "Radio News" broadcasting station.

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The Opening Night

GILSON V. WILLETS, THE MANAGER AND CHIEF ANNOUNCER AT WRNY.

HUGO GERNSBACK, EDITOR OF RADIO NEWS, OPENED THIS STATION.

CHAUNCEY DEPEW TOLD SOME OF HIS "BOYHOOD RECOLLECTIONS."

DR LEE DE FOREST, THE "MASTER MIND OF RADIO," MADE A BRIEF ADDRESS.

"BUGS" BAER, THE NOTED HUMORIST WAS MASTER OF CEREMONIES.

BEN BERNIE, THE POPULAR ORCHESTRA LEADER, BROADCAST DANCE MUSIC.

"NATURAL & INNOCENT HUMOUR..."

CONTENTS IN PART

Chapter Vun—A corrected edition of de woild's gratest potery. De Shooting of Sem de Jew — Voodman Spare Dot Tree—De Keed's Lest Fight—De Willage Blecksmit — De Face on de Bar Room Floor—An Old Sweetheart From Mine —*and six others, famously funny.*

Chapter 2 — Silas Greene ansers all qwestions relatin' to life, liberty, and the pursuit of members a the opposite sex.

Third Worse—In wich Abner Greene, the son of Silas, tells of his conkwests over the fare sex, and attempts to express his views on matters uv interest to nobody.

In this age of restricted ethnic humour, constrained expressions of sardonic observation, and the acute and immediate defensiveness of those who are self-conscious of their background, race, or self-insufficiency, what was accepted as "natural and innocent humour" in all media of the Twenties catering to everyman, it is difficult to even tell a harmless joke without offending the manipulated, superficial sensibilities of the uncultured.

The cut above demonstrates the wide acceptance of contemporary humour, which always has turned on the things at hand. Today, such a booklet could never be published in the U.S., despite the fact that the above work was the work of respected Yiddish scholars in N.Y.C. at the time. As another facet of sociological phenomena, I include it here. I might also mention that Mrs. Gernsback wrote and had published short-stories written in the so-called dialect of the coloured people of the Deep South, and no-one objected, not even the N.A.A.C.P., so one must wonder just how authentic are our manufactured social restraints.

GERNSBACK ALUMNI

Aside from the many contributions Gernsback single-handedly made to Radio, those whom he had gathered around him also went on to make distinctive contributions. The handful of names listed below will emphasise the point, I feel, and you should recognize all of them.

Robt. E. Lacault	Radio Designer and Manufacturer.
Isidor Goldberg	PILOT Radio Co. President.
John F. Rider	Rider's Service Manuals.
Milton B. Sleeper	Radio Designer and Manufacturer.
A.P.Peek	*Scientific America* Mgng. Editor.
Victor H. Laughter	SUPREME Test Equip., President.
E.T.Jones	RCA Test Engineer.
H.G.Cisin	Radio Designer.
Clyde Fitch	Radio Designer and Editor.
Samuel Cohen	General Instrument President.
Pierre Boucheron	Remington Arms General Manager.
Robt. Hertzberg	*Modern Mechanics* Mgng. Editor.
Alfred P. Morgan	Radio Designer (*Paragon*).
Austin C. Lescarbourra	Author & Mgng. of Many Media.
Leon L. Adelman	Cornell-Dunilier Sales Manager.
Harry W. Secor	*Short-Wave Craft* Mgng. Editor.

It is unfortunate that in-depth biographical data are not available on these men, as such data would certainly flesh-out the form of early Radio, not only in terms of their technical contributions, but also in personally relateable terms, which would emphasise all over again the rise of Radio as a distinct social phenomenon.

An aside on Victor H. Laughter might not be amiss here. When he left Gernsback he went to Greenwood, Mississippi, and set-up a plant to design, manufacture, and distribute test equipment under the trade-name of "Supreme". The name was well-chosen, as Supreme test equipment was among the best, and even today commands respect. To my knowledge, no-one has ever written about the man who insisted on quality that was top-drawer as well as aesthetically satisfying packaging.

* * *
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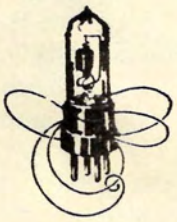

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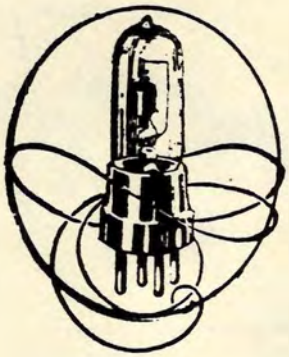

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